



CITY OF HAYWARD

AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE 10/6/98

AGENDA ITEM _____
WORK SESSION ITEM Wst 2

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: **TREE STUMP REMOVAL, PRACTICES**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council review and comment on this Stump Removal Practices Report.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

As Council is aware, there has been a significant backlog of tree stumps awaiting removal. It has not been unusual for a citizen to wait several years for this work to be accomplished. The backlog is due to the significant number of trees requiring removal in recent years, as well as the inability to augment the tree stump removal effort, due to higher competing City priorities. At the current time, there is a backlog of 242 stumps awaiting removal.

After a tree has been removed to ground level, the next phase in the tree removal operation is to grind out the stump and surface roots of the tree. The tree removal work is completely different from the stump removal work, requiring different employee skills and equipment. Hence, the stump removal work cannot be done by the tree removal crew. The stump removal work requires two Groundskeepers, a stump grinder, a front-end loader and a flat bed truck. Before removing the stump, the work area is marked in white paint and the Underground Service Alert Company is notified to field mark underground utilities at the site. After this safety precaution is taken, the stump and roots are ground out to a depth of about 18 inches.

In the past, stump removals and tree removals were performed independent of each other in the 10 tree maintenance districts. Stump removals and tree removals were each done two weeks per month but on alternating weeks because the Division's one front-end loader is required in both operations. With this approach, the time between tree removals and stump removals has ranged from one to three years or longer depending on work load and schedule.

Beginning in March 1998, stump removals were adjusted to coincide with the tree removal schedule. This means that at the same time a tree crew is performing tree removals in a district, the stump crew is removing stumps in that same district. With this approach, the stump crew works two weeks per month towards removing the inventory of 242 stumps. The other two weeks are spent removing stumps that were generated by a tree crew performing removals in mat district and assisting the tree crew in removals with the front-end loader. This allows the stump crew to remove the new stumps quickly, generally within three months, resulting in no increase in the inventory. This change was implemented to achieve the following objectives: improve customer service in terms of the number of stumps

removed annually and reduce the wait time for removals; and maximize the use of one front-end loader, required in both tree and stump removals. This scheduling improvement allows staff to perform stump removals five days per week throughout the month, thus increasing the number of stumps removed.

The necessary 1993-1995 staff reductions in tree trimming due to budget limitations contributed to the accumulation of stumps. During this time, tree removals increased as we experienced an increase in tree failure, due to the excessive weight of untrimmed trees. However, in the 1997/98 budget, Council authorized the reinstatement of a three-person tree crew. This augmentation has already reduced the number of tree removals for the first time in three years. In turn, this reduces the number of existing stumps. The numbers listed below show this positive trend and staffs' production.

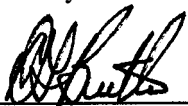
	<u>1995</u>	1996	1997	<u>1998(1/1-7/31)</u>
Stump Removals	222	197	260	350
Tree Removals	405	421	407	238

Based on the 1998 production numbers cited above, stump removals are keeping pace and exceeding tree removals for reasons previously discussed. Staff anticipates this trend to continue and gradually improve as the number of tree removals declines in response to the preventative tree trimming performed by the tree crew restored in the 1997/98 budget. Under the current program and maintaining current production levels, staff estimates it will take eighteen months to eliminate the inventory of stumps.

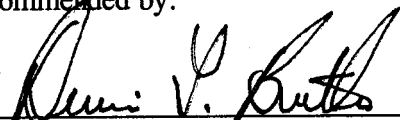
As a benchmark on customer concern between 1995 and 1998, the Landscape Division received only three constituent complaint forms from the Mayors' office concerning stump removals. During this same period, the Division removed 1,029 stumps.

In summary, staff believes the current program is the most cost effective in terms of the stump removal effort. Should Council wish to augment the program to reduce the tree stump backlog, it would be appropriate to give staff direction at the mid-year budget review, when priorities for the next year are discussed.

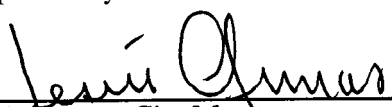
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